
**JENNIFER COAT AND HILLIER'S PERSPECTIVE OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
GENDER AND LANGUAGE**

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Abstract

Gender creeps into our day-to-day life so smoothly that we take it for granted and accept it as a natural part of our lives, something that needs no explanation. It man if est sits finally aspect so four social life. The traces of gender can be found in our way of speaking, the use of humor, conflict situations and soon. The current study is an attempt to, in the first place, have our view of prominent sociolinguistic approaches to gender (dominance vs. difference approach). The study provides some critical viewpoints of these approaches.

Keywords: gender, language, speakingstyle, dominanceparadigm, differenceparadigm

Introduction

While sex refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that are defined for men and women, gender refers to the roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society constructs for men and women and which are considered appropriate for them(World Health Organization).In other words, sex is a fixed concept which does not change across societies while gender is in a state of flux and varies from one society to another.

Some years later, Jennifer Coates(1986,1996,1998) carried out an in-depth examination of conversations in single-sex female groups to investigate how far and in what circumstances women make use of features of so-called 'women' language'. She argues that the use of hedges by women is not evidenced by the run assertiveness or weakness but it demonstrates the strength of women' conversational and personal skills. She furthermore believes that hedge scan is deployed for a range of positive functions:

1. They can express shades of doubt/confidence.
2. They allow us to be sensitive to other's feelings.
3. They help us in the search for the right words to express what we mean.

4. They allow us to avoid playing expert status.

These positive functions of hedges (Coates,1993) are among the functions of discourse marker shave in spoken interaction. Adopting the Systemic-Functional model as an analytical framework, Hillier(2004) compare an extract from a telephone conversation with one from a face-to-face conversation between two females speakers. It means that women use a higher proportion of each feature in the phone than the face-to-face conversation which can be attributed to the differences in the mode of communication. Although Hillier's investigation throws an interesting light on aspect soft talk between women friends, due to the limitation of the scope of her study the results are not applicable to their contexts or participants, for example, women in a working/social situation for the interactions incross-sex groups.

Differences.Dominant Paradigm

Over the past years, studies on gender and communication could be categorized under two frameworks:

1.Gender across-cultural difference

2.Genderassocialpower/dominance

of different paradigm

Theadvocatesofthedifference/cross-culture approach believe that women and men speak differently because of fundamental differences in the irrelation to language, perhaps due to different socialization and early (childhood) experience (Tannen,1990). Adopting Gumperz's (1982)cross-cultural perspective, the proponent soft he difference model locate the cross-sex miscommunication in early sex-segregated behaviors in which boys and girls learn“genderlect”(MaltzandBroker,1982)which is carried into adulthood and is the main reason form is communication between two gender groups. For the proponents of the cross-gender model, the difference in male-female language usage is so broad that they see it as the cross-cultural difference.

For Deborah Tannen, a well-known advocate of this approach, men and women's linguistic behavior are so different that she calls cross-gender communication cross-cultural. In her book *You Just Don't Understand* (1990) she posits that the main reason for the difference between men- women's speech is that men and women try to accomplish different things with talk. Men approach conversation as a contest. Thus, they prefer to lead a conversation in a direction in which they can take the central role by for example telling a joke, displaying information or skill, which Tannen calls“report talk”(public speaking). While most women's conversation is a way of establishing community and creating a connection, which she calls“rapport talk”(private speaking)(Tannen,1990,p.74-95).

She sees the style differences in conversational behavior as the indication of equal but different modes of behaving. One of these ways is what Tannen (1990,p.53) calls "troubles talk." She states that for women, talking about troubles is the essence of connection. I tell you my troubles, you tell me your troubles and wear close. Men, however, heart trouble talk as a request for advice, so they respond with a solution. When a man offers this kind of information the woman often feels as if he is trying to diminish her problem or cut her off(p.49-53).

AkiUchida's study entitled 'When the difference is dominance' (1992) was among those critical responses to Tannen book.

Furthermore, the experiment evidence he collected for her book belongs to American women entirely. Thus, whether the results are applicable too their societies/cultures are unclear. Dominance Paradigm

The dominance model, a feminist-oriented perspective, stresses that differences between men 'and women's speech style arise because of the male dominance over women which persists in order to keep women subordinate to men. Through the social inequality and patriarchy lenses, the proponents of the dominance paradigm voice the objection to a cross-gender model of the difference camp. She opines that " any difference in men' and women's way of communication is not natural and inevitable but cultural and political". Men are ' less polite' not because they cannot use the strategies, but because in most situations they feel no need to"(p.185).

While the advocates of the ' difference paradigm' argue that women as a sub-cultural group have different but preferred conversational strategies, the ' dominance theorists' point out that some groups are heavily disadvantaged by their conversational styles, i.e. the conversational styles of some groups have unfavorable material consequences for their members (see.g., Fishman,1980. Thus, speakers who employ a less assertive style of speech are less likely to get the floor, to be heard seriously and to be able to control the conversation flow.

The main concern of the difference/dominance paradigm is to focus on the men-women speech from a sociolinguistic perspective and to look for the sociological cause soft he difference/similarity between their linguistic behavior. Thus, reviewing the scholarly studies that carried out on male-female discourse contributes to a better understanding of the nature of the existing differences/similarities. It could, further, help to make a connection between the use of DM and the sociological facets of interaction by focusing on those interpersonal needs the interlocutors have in fulfilling their social roles endowed to them by the society from which they come from.

Conclusion

This study has outlined the findings of previous studies on gender and language, a pervasive topic since 1970s. The current study was an attempt to challenge such stereotypes as women are talkative, they gossip more, they are super polite, they are being interrupted more and they are mainly looking for intimacy and establishing friendship while men speak more comfortable in public and use more curse and rough language. For instance, certain ethnic background allow "private/public" talk for a specific gender group or in some cultures 'overlap' is atoken of engagement and interest while it is considered rude and impolite in others. The next time we ask the question of whether men and women have different conversational styles, we need to take into account the context of cross-cultural communication.

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